
**DOCUMENTATION OF MURAL
BUILDING 4720
U.S. ARMY FIELD ARTILLERY CENTER
FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION,
OKLAHOMA**

by
**Joe C. Freeman, AIA
William Rushing**

for
**Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works
Fort Sill Military Reservation
Fort Sill, Oklahoma
and
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Tulsa District**

**FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION TECHNICAL SERIES
REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS NUMBER 5**




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Principal Investigator
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for

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION, DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC WORKS
FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA

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REPORT OF INVESTIGATIONS NUMBER 5

Geo-Marine, Inc.
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ABSTRACT

The documentation of the 1943, World War II era, mural located in Building No. 4720 at the U.S. Army Field Artillery Center, Fort Sill Military Reservation, Oklahoma was conducted to mitigate the removal of the mural prior to demolition of Building No. 4720. Geo-Marine, Inc., conducted this work under Contract No. DACW-56-92-D-0010, Delivery Order No. 0018 between December 1993 and May 1994. Duane E. Peter, Director of the Cultural Resources Management Division of Geo-Marine, Inc., served as Principal Investigator. The architectural field work was done by Joe C. Freeman, AIA. Architectural documentation included review of materials in the Fort Sill archives, an interview with Towana Spivey, Director of the Fort Sill Museum and Archives, field investigation and notes, and photography. The photography included 35 mm color slides, 35 mm black-and-white, and large format, 4-x-5 black-and-white. A historic context was produced by William Rushing, a historian. The historical research included correspondence with environmental directorates at Army bases throughout the United States, phone interviews with members of the Ryerson family, and archival research.

MURAL, BUILDING 4720
U.S. ARMY FIELD ARTILLERY CENTER AND FORT SILL
FORT SILL
COMANCHE COUNTY
OKLAHOMA

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

**Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional office
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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MURAL, BUILDING 4720

U.S. Army Field Artillery Center and Fort Sill

Comanche County

Oklahoma

Joe C. Freeman, Photographer, November 1993

INTERIOR VIEW OF MURAL LOOKING SOUTH

INTERIOR VIEW OF MURAL LOOKING SOUTH

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

MURAL, BUILDING 4720

Location: Building 4720, on the south side of Hartell Road, between Pitman Road and Bragg Road.
The building is scheduled for demolition.

Date of Construction: The mural was painted in 1943.

Artist: Sgt. Dean Ryerson

Present Owner: U.S. Army

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The mural, painted in 1943 by Sgt. Ryerson is an example of World War II heroic and patriotic art that was an outgrowth of 1930s public arts programs. The mural, and others like it, are threatened because they were usually painted on the walls of temporary buildings, many of which are now scheduled for demolition.

Building 4720:

Building 4720 is a large wood-framed structure with a gabled roof designed and used as an enlisted men's service club and later as a band hall. The interior of the building is dominated by a large interior space that extends fully two stories in height and has a second floor gallery which overlooks the large space. In the large room, floor are of wood, the walls are of painted gypsum board on wood studs, and the roof is constructed with exposed light-weight wooden trusses. The ceiling follows the slope of the roof and is also clad in painted gypsum board. Suspended fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling and the numerous windows round the structure provide a well-lit space.

The mural is located on an interior wall at the south end of the large room, the length of which runs north-south. The wall containing the mural runs east-west and has a door centered in the room. Stairs to the gallery rise on both sides of the door opening and extend out from the wall containing the mural. The wall is constructed of 2x6 wood studs spaced at 2'-0" on centers and is surfaced with 1/2" thick gypsum wall board on both sides. The gypsum board is attached to the wood framing with common wire nails and is laid up horizontally in 2'-0" wide pieces of varying lengths, usually from 4'-0" to 8'-0". The gypsum board is floated at the joints but appears to be untaped.

The Mural:

The mural is a large painting approximately 24'-6" wide by 29'-0" high. The painting format is that of a large shield with a dark blue eagle silhouetted in the background and surrounded by ornate scrollwork. The foreground depicts three helmeted and shirtless young soldiers in partial combat gear with rifles slung in an heroic pose. Banners, placed both above and below the figures read "Duty Honor Country" and "As We Follow The Guidon" respectively. The eagle appears to hold the upper banner in its beak.

The central figure, with arms crossed and legs engaged, but slightly apart, appears to stand on the door head. This soldier has on green military pants, gaiters, and has an M-1 carbine hanging barrel down from a leather sling. The soldier to the left has one leg engaged and appears close to movement. He wears military pants, an ammunition belt with canteen, gaiters and has a slung M-1 carbine, barrel up, on his back. The figure to the right wears military pants, a web belt, and gaiters and is artistically posed in a classical *contra pasto* stance with the weight on his left leg. The composition of the three heroic figures projects an image of youth, strength, and patriotism.

The mural is painted with an oil-based paint and shows refinement in painting technique, composition, and figures.

The Artist:

The mural was painted by Sgt. Dean Ryerson in 1943. Sgt. Ryerson, born in Columbus, Ohio, was attached to Headquarters Battery, Fort Sill Replacement Center during World War II. According to local newspaper accounts, Sgt. Ryerson was active in the arts and organized a number of exhibitions of soldier's works at Fort Sill. Sgt. Ryerson's mother was an interior designer for *Good Housekeeping Magazine* and perhaps encouraged his interest in the arts. It is clear from the painting that Sgt. Ryerson had formal training in the arts. His training, as evidenced by the style of the painting, surely must have included exposure to classical Greek and Roman sculpture and the work of the great muralists of the 1930s.

HISTORIC CONTEXT FOR THE WORLD WAR II MURAL IN BUILDING 4720 FORT SILL MILITARY RESERVATION, OKLAHOMA

by William Rushing

The World War II patriotic mural that was originally located in Building Number 4720 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, is an example of mural art work typically painted by Works Project Administration (WPA) artists during the Depression. Many artists painted murals at other military installations during World War II, but most of these were actually completed by African American soldiers and German prisoners of war (POWs). An excellent example of such is the mural painted over the fireplace in the African American Officers' club at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Other examples of POW mural work can be found at Fort Drum, New York, and at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

The specific mural at Fort Sill was not the only mural completed there during the mobilization period and subsequent war. However, it is unique because: (1) of the time period in which it was painted; (2) the artist, Sergeant Dean Curtis Ryerson, represents the easy, professional transition made by many artists during the Depression into the Special Services Division of military service; and (3) very few of these murals remain at military installations because of current demolition of mobilization buildings.

BACKGROUND ON MURAL ART OF THE 1920s AND 1930s

Mural art (wall painting) has been practiced since prehistoric populations lived in rock shelters. Many ancient cultures brought the art to an advanced level, one of which was the Aztecs of central Mexico. Murals flourished in Europe during and after the Middle Ages when they decorated many of the cathedral ceilings and walls.

However, mural art was not generally practiced in the United States until about the mid-1890s when Gilded Age philanthropists had murals included in buildings and libraries that they donated to the public. The mural artists were instructed by the elite to paint only classical themes. Allegory, with its indirect, hidden meaning, was the dominant focus. The average citizen simply could not relate to these murals because of the complex allegory and its lifeless (and often inaccurate) decorative illustration of ancient historical subjects such as *The Baptism of Pocahontas* found in the Rotunda of the Capitol building. By 1920, this style caused mass public apathy for mural art (Norman 1973).

During the decade of the 1920s, as the overall psychology of the general public became more isolationist, the average American citizen also began to distrust the locally powerful and privileged. The gap between the general public and those of wealth widened even more by the fact that the elite tended to send their offspring to Europe for formal education and cultural refinement. The typical upper-class American was interested in European-style art and was scornful of American art. In time, a few of the wealthy began to support a group of native-born artists,

most of whom imitated the European masters who specialized in portrait/easel art. While the unequal increase in individual income caused a revival of interest in the arts for those who could afford the luxury, a drastic disinterest in the arts was occurring with the average citizen too concerned with the direct problems of everyday survival. Thus, a major shift from mural art (public) to easel art (more private collections) occurred and many of the mural artists became jobless.

With the onset of the Great Depression and the economy in ruins, the elite and the entrepreneur were less popular figures than in previous history. Along with this contempt for the wealthy came a general disinterest for the elite's hobby of art collecting since great art was restricted to the rich only and unavailable to the ordinary citizen. This inaccessibility, combined with low demand for art by the ordinary public, nearly erased mural art from the scene during the early 1930s.

During this same time in Mexico, government officials were promoting mural art through a new social experiment in which young artists covered public buildings in Mexico City with murals expressing the ideals of the Mexican revolution. For this work the artists received a small salary from the government. The themes of these murals depicted great social ideals: freedom, liberty, heroism, patriotism, and a positive belief in the work ethic (McKinzie 1973:5).

This experiment did not go unnoticed by artists in the United States, and some were heavily influenced by such great Hispanic muralists as Diego Rivera. Among this group of American artists was George Biddle. As the years of the Great Depression were beginning to unfold and the public and financial appreciation for the arts on the wane, Biddle wrote a letter to his old classmate, the newly-elected president, Franklin Roosevelt, dated May 9, 1933. In this letter, he made note of the grand achievements of the Mexican muralists and suggested that young American artists who supported the New Deal "revolution" would be eager to express those ideals on the public buildings and walls of America (McKinzie 1973:5).

Biddle's idea of public employment of artists during the Depression was not new to the President. While he was governor of New York, Roosevelt had placed artists on the state payrolls. So Biddle's suggestion struck a chord with the new president. Artists around the country also added to Biddle's chorus, trying to convince the New Deal officials that if they were really serious about their "relief, recovery, and reform," then they could easily convince the public to accept a program that would not only put artists to work, but would "bring art back to the common man" (Dows 1972).

By November 1933, Biddle had combined forces with Edward Bruce and together they convinced Harold L. Ickes, head of the Public Works Administration, of the virtue of state-sponsored art. Armed with the knowledge that art was beyond the reach of most Americans as a result of the economics of the times, the geographical remoteness, or the traditional class divisions, artists and government officials united in an unprecedented effort to bring art and culture to every citizen of every age and circumstance, especially through highly visible public murals.

There were four programs undertaken by the government. The earliest and most short-lived was called the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), and was administered by the Treasury Department. This was a crash relief program that lasted from December 1933 to June 1934. It employed about 3,700 artists and cost about \$1,312,000. The second program was initially called the Section of Painting and Sculpture, but was later changed to the Section of Fine Arts, commonly known as "The Section." This program, also administered by the Treasury Department, obtained paintings, murals, and sculpture for new federal buildings, especially new post offices and courthouses. This second program was begun in October 1934 and lasted until July 1943. It awarded 1400 contracts and cost about \$2,571,000. The third program, begun in July 1935, and called the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP), was funded by WPA allocations to the Treasury for the decoration of post offices and older federal buildings. It employed 446 persons, most of whom were on direct relief. It cost \$833,784 and was discontinued in 1939.

The fourth program, the largest and most encompassing, was the Work Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). Started in August 1935, it lasted until June 1943 and cost about \$35,000,000. The program

employed over 5,000 persons in four major fields: music, theater, writing, and art (United States Works Progress Administration 1937:14). For the first time in United States history, artists, conscious of their ability to do so, put art within the reach of all the American people. Although all facets of the arts were supported in some way by New Deal programs, the most obvious and the most public were the more than 4,000 murals painted between 1935 and 1943 (United States Federal Works Agency 1946:Table XVI:133). Muralists, taking their lead from Roosevelt, felt that Americans faced a devastating psychological crisis and needed a sense of national unity and purpose to overcome it. It was felt that more public exposure to art might actually help people weather the Depression by giving them meaningful and hopeful symbols.

THEME AND SYMBOLS OF DEPRESSION-ERA MURAL ART

Just as the National Recovery Administration (NRA) had used a symbolic Blue Eagle in an attempt to unite labor, capital, and consumer in a national effort to promote economic recovery, the artists employed similar emblems for the same purpose along with aiding in the mental recovery of the nation (Park and Markowitz 1984:5). Influenced by their Mexican counterparts, they also employed corresponding symbols -- the family, the pioneer, the common man, the farmer, the worker--to tie people from scattered and often isolated communities together as a nation and to promote a common heritage and purpose (Park and Markowitz 1984:29). The fall from economic grace, which had so shocked the American people and had induced in so many millions of unemployed a profound sense of self-doubt and inadequacy, generated a turning back to a past when people presumably did things right and the community (and the nation) prospered. The muralists in particular, aware of their public audience, sought to trace a national heritage through a simple application of a single idea, especially along lines of an heroic effort or a mutual effort by several individuals working for a common cause. This was in total contrast to the earlier classical style of murals with its complex and remote symbolism.

There was a tremendous effort to regionalize the murals to instill local pride and to portray the origins or the economy of the community, for example, coal mining in Kentucky and wheat farming in the Midwest. This effort was not without controversy, since muralists from New England were employed to decorate courthouses in the Deep South and New Yorkers painted Native American scenes in Texas or Oklahoma. There were some common symbols used universally by these muralists to convey their simple themes. The positive side of the work ethic was widely represented by shirtless, muscular men straining at their profession with the tools of their trade in their hands or by their side. Dedication and focus of task were depicted through gaunt, unsmiling faces, with eyes that were focused on the struggle, never looking directly at the mural viewers. Tall, proud, erect stances by subjects in the foreground signified bravery and gallantry. People that were painted taking a step upward to a summit or hidden platform denoted new beginnings or dedication of unified efforts. Unity of purpose and national pride were symbolized by shields, emblems, and mottos on flags along with easily recognizable national symbols (Newell 1973). The placement of the murals is also of interest. Prominence and maximum exposure were the rule of the day. Although buildings with long blank walls or rotundas would seem to be logical places for paintings, about half of the murals were painted over entrances, exits, and office doors, especially in the newly constructed post offices. This pattern of placing the murals in the most direct view of the public was repeated over and over throughout the Depression years.

TRANSITION FROM THE DEPRESSION TO WORLD WAR II

By the late 1930s, two new unique and unrelated forces began to emerge in American mural art. First, conservative elements in Congress began to question New Deal expenditures, particularly federal funding for the arts. A growing number of legislators objected to some of the artists using their murals for expression of sensitive social issues such as unequal treatment of minorities and unfair labor practices, especially if the piece seemed to be hiding subliminal communist overtones. The other force was the growing world tension and the coming war. The simultaneous impact of these two stresses on the New Deal caused a change in direction for Section and WPA/FAP muralists.

WPA administrators believed if war came, artists, facing unemployment due to political efforts to dismantle the New Deal, could be employed directly by the military, or could be used to bolster national morale for the war effort through their works of art.

Olin Dows, Chief of the Treasury Relief Art Project from 1935 to 1938, approached the army in 1939 and asked military officials to take on a group of painters to make a record of the war. He had already been successful in getting some work for artists through the Red Cross and the Office of Civil Defense documenting war production facilities (Dows 1972). Holger Cahill, Director of the WPA/FAP, proposed in 1940 that artists be enrolled in the intensive defense effort. Colonel Francis C. Harrington, WPA Administrator from 1939 to 1943, advocated making FAP and Section artists "a second line of defense" in the event of war (McKinzie 1973:167).

As part of the military preparation for war, the Army established a Morale Division in the Adjutant General's Office in July 1940. It was placed under the Chief of Staff in March 1941 and redesignated the Morale Branch (United States Department of Defense [USDOD] 1947). After Pearl Harbor, the WPA offered its entire manpower to the Secretary of War and was reorganized into the WPA War Services Division, with most of the men serving in the Army under the Morale Branch (McKinzie 1973:169). In January 1942, the Morale Branch became the Special Services Branch with the added function of administering such special Army services as the Army Exchange Service, the Army Motion Picture Service, and the Library Service. On July 20, 1942, the Special Services Branch became a staff division and was redesignated the Special Services Division (USDOD 1947).

Many civilian artists, from painters to entertainers, were drafted into special service work as the Army grew during World War II. From the beginning of the war, the Special Services Division was responsible for USO tours and the production of thousands of military enlistment posters. Special Services pioneered handicrafts for soldiers, providing material for painting and sculpturing. Hobby shops were established and soldier art contests were conducted. This continued until the conclusion of the war in 1945 (USDOD 1947).

OTHER MURALS AND ARTISTS AT FORT SILL

Fort Sill housed a Special Services unit at its Replacement Center and used these former civilian artists in various capacities, from illustrating training manuals published on the post to training soldier-artists while on duty. Murals were used throughout the installation for decoration of the various officers' clubs and training facilities.

The nationally recognized watercolor artist, Kraemer Kittredge, was an enlisted man at Fort Sill prior to Pearl Harbor. Kittredge had taught art for fifteen years at Amherst College, Massachusetts, before becoming an instructor at the art museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1940. While on an extended stay at Oklahoma City, he was drafted and sent to Fort Sill for his basic training. At Fort Sill, he achieved the rank of corporal and had several exhibits at the concurrent camp Recreation Hall Number 2, where he also painted one small mural (*Fort Sill Army News* [FSAN] 13 June 1941:2).

Private (Pvt.) Ralph L. Stuart, a native of Oklahoma City, was drafted and, because of his talents, was placed in the Field Artillery School Reproduction Department. Stuart, who had studied art for two and one-half years at the University of Oklahoma under Oscar Jacobsen and Leonard Goode, felt like his career was coming to an end with his processing at the Replacement Center in November 1940. But after he was placed in the Reproduction Department, he began to work on maps and charts, using watercolors. Later, he mastered the air brush and began to specialize in illustrations for training manuals. On his own time, he painted local rodeo scenes and copies of friends' snapshots. His only known mural was a small one painted in a temporary mess hall in the concurrent camp area (FSAN 29 August 1941).

Sixteen small murals were painted in the Reception Center mess halls by two draftees, Pvt. Jack E. Barber and Pvt. Durwood M. Robinson. Pvt. Barber was a graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute, where he was taught by

Thomas Hart Benton. Before he was drafted, Pvt. Robinson, an art student at Oklahoma A & M, was a WPA art consultant in New York where he was also employed as a cartoonist and an art instructor for the National Youth Administration (NYA). All the murals painted by these two men had Spanish themes that ranged from bullfights to romantic nights (FSAN 21 November 1941).

Sgt. Albert T. Burns of Ithaca, New York, former outstanding student of Olaf Brauner at the Fine Arts School of Cornell University, was stationed at Fort Sill during this period. Sgt. Burns, prior to induction, had gained experience as a muralist by assisting in the mural paintings at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. While on duty at Fort Sill, he completed several murals in the Hospital Cantonment area northeast of Post Field. His largest piece was painted in the Hospital Recreation Hall (FSSI 25 April 1942).

Pvt. Oscar L. Williams painted the interior of the Battery A, 29th Battalion mess hall with American flags; a complete line of artillery pieces used at Fort Sill including 4 x 4s, 6 x 6s, and jeeps; and, the battalion guidon which he placed over the kitchen door (FSAN 13 June 1942:4).

The famous western artist, Harold Bugbee, was stationed at Fort Sill and placed in Special Services. Listed in "Who's Who in American Art," Bugbee had been a longtime member of the artists' colony at Taos, New Mexico, before his induction. In addition to displays in New York City, he previously painted the murals for the Herring Hotel of Amarillo, Texas, and had illustrated most of J. Evetts Haley's books on western heroes. Although he worked in the Special Services Division, there is no record of any mural painted by him at Fort Sill (FSAN 24 October 1942).

Murals of African American dancers were painted in the African American enlisted men's club constructed for use by the 31st Battalion, an African American artillery unit. The artist, Pvt. Marius McDonald, was the drum major in the 31st Battalion Band (*Fort Sill Replacement Center Recorder* [FSRCT] 29 January 1943).

Pvt. Anthony J. Paness, muralist and sculptor from Dallas, reported to the Replacement Center on November 20, 1942. Pvt. Paness was noted for being part of the team that painted the murals at Fair Park in Dallas. While at Fort Sill, he helped in the art classes under the direction of Sgt. Ryerson and concentrated mostly on sculpture although he did aid in teaching mural art to the soldier-students (*Fort Sill Replacement Center Times* [FSRCT] 27 November 1942).

Building Number 4720

Building Number 4720, now destroyed, was a large wood-framed structure with a gabled roof originally designed and used as an enlisted men's service club. The interior of the building was dominated by a large interior space that extends fully two stories in height and had a second floor gallery which overlooked the large space. The second floor balcony area housed the Replacement Center Library. In the large room, the floor was wood, the walls were constructed of painted gypsum board on wood studs, and the roof was constructed with exposed lightweight wooden trusses. The ceiling followed the slope of the roof and was also clad in painted gypsum board. Suspended fluorescent lights hung from the ceiling and the numerous windows round the structure provided a well lighted space. The mural was located on an interior wall at the south end of the large room, the length of which ran north-south. The wall containing the mural ran east-west and had a door centered in the room. Stairs to the gallery rose on both sides of the door opening and extended out from the wall containing the mural. The wall was constructed of 2-x-6 wood studs spaced at 2'-0" on centers and is surfaced with 1/2" thick gypsum wall board on both sides. The gypsum board is attached to the wood framing with common wire nails and is laid up horizontally in 2'-0" wide pieces of varying lengths, usually from 4'-0" to 8'-0". The gypsum board is floated at the joints but appears to be untaped.

The Mural

The mural, crated and preserved, measures 24.5 ft (7.448 m) wide by 29 ft (8.816 m) high and is painted on 2-x-4 foot gypsum board panels on an interior wall at the south end of the large room over an exit, similar to post office murals painted by WPA/Section artists. The painting format is that of a large shield with a dark eagle silhouetted in the background and surrounded by ornate scrollwork. Banners, placed both high and low on the shield, read "Duty Honor Country" and "As We Follow The Guidon." The eagle, reminiscent of the Blue Eagle used in National Recovery Act (NRA) posters and obviously a symbol of patriotism, is holding the upper banner in its beak (Figure 1).

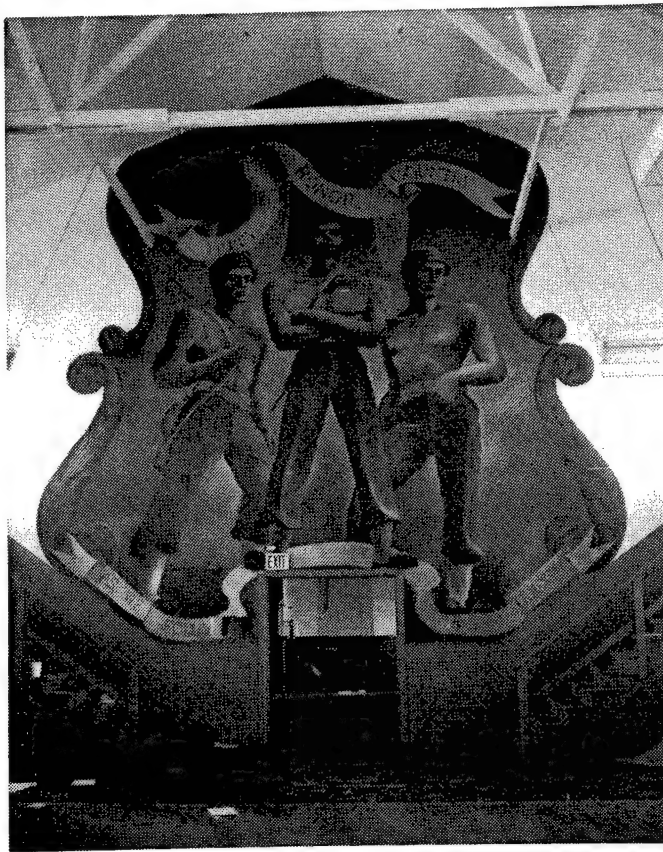


Figure 1. Mural as it appeared in Building No. 4720 at the Fort Sill Military Reservation.

This mural follows all the traditional patterns of those painted during the Depression. The foreground depicts three helmeted and shirtless young soldiers in partial combat gear with rifles. This would obviously be something with which the soldiers stationed at Ft. Sill could relate. The central figure, higher than the other two figures and artistically placed with his combat boots on the door head, stands resolute, with arms crossed and eyes focused well above any observer. He is wearing green fatigue pants, white leggings, and has an M-1 carbine hanging off his back with the barrel down. The soldier to the observer's left has his left leg engaged as if climbing to the same level as the central figure. He is wearing green fatigue pants, white leggings, an ammunition belt with canteen, and has his M-1 carbine, barrel up, strapped on his shoulder. The figure to the observer's right wears green fatigue pants, leggings, and a military web belt, and is posed artistically with his right leg engaged as if also climbing to the same level as the central figure. The faces of the three soldiers are typically gaunt with their eyes indirectly focused above the observer. The classic 1930s mural themes of unified purpose and focus along with courageous determination and youthful strength are evident.

The Artist and Duty at Fort Sill

The mural was painted by Sergeant (Sgt.) Dean C. Ryerson in 1943. Sgt. Ryerson, born in Columbus, Ohio, on December 23, 1917, was a graduate of Central High School of Columbus and received a B.S. from the Fine Arts School of Ohio State University in 1940. After teaching for two years at Alliance High School, Columbus, he entered the military service (*The Columbus Dispatch* [TCD] 10 September 1978: 10). He was attached to the Headquarters Battery, Fort Sill Replacement Center, on March 9, 1942, as part of the Special Services Division, and became the head of the Arts Department for the Replacement Center (FSAN 17 October 1942).

According to local newspaper accounts, Sgt. Ryerson was active in the training of soldier-artists posted at Fort Sill. As the director of the Arts Department for Special Services, he taught classes on Monday and Thursday nights in nearby Lawton, Oklahoma (FSAN 17 October 1942; FSRCT 18 October 1942). Through his contacts in the Midwest, Sgt. Ryerson's students had their works displayed at the Kansas City Art Museum and the Chicago Art Institute (FSRCT 27 November 1942).

In April 1943, he organized and directed an art contest and exhibition of soldiers' works in the local USO club in Lawton. It was recorded that this exhibit was the first showing of soldier art and crafts sponsored by a USO club in the United States (*The Lawton Constitution* [TLC] 25 April 1943). This would be in keeping with the directive of the Special Services Division. At this same exhibit, a portrait painted by Ryerson was sold for \$425 to the subject of the painting (TLC 2 May 1943).

On May 6, 1943, he had the exhibit moved on post. These works included charcoal and crayon sketches, oil and water paintings, photography, posterwork, and leather handicrafts, all done by soldiers stationed at Fort Sill (nc 12 May 1943:7). About the same time, Building 4720 was erected as an enlisted men's service club. The club, which included a cafeteria, a snack bar, and a library, was a place for the soldiers to come and be reunited with their family members (*The Cannoneer* [TC] 1993:1). Working alone, Sgt. Ryerson painted and finished the mural almost immediately after the completion of the building. Among the many civilian family visitors was his mother, Al Ryerson, who was an interior designer for Good Housekeeping magazine (TC 1993:9).

After his training at Fort Sill, Ryerson spent two years in Europe attached to the Special Services Division and was discharged from the Army at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, on November 14, 1945. After the war, he attended the University of Southern California where he received a M.S. in Fine Arts. For many years, he maintained a studio in Hollywood. He designed a monument for the Civic Center of Long Beach, California, for which he received many accolades. He later settled in the greater Boston area and died on September 9, 1978, after a lengthy illness (TCD 10 September 1978).

It is very reasonable to conclude, as evidenced by the mural itself, and his academic training at Ohio State University that he had exposure to the works of the great muralists of the 1930s before the war, and employed this knowledge in the mural at Port Sill. The mural itself remains unique for the distinctive time period and circumstances under which it was painted; because the artist, Ryerson, represents the transition made by citizen artists into specialized duty during World War II; and finally, because there are very few World War II-era murals left across the nation and no others at Port Sill.

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